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## **USDA Certifies Rhode Island Rural Development Council**

David Tuttle, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island announced today that the certification of the Rhode Island State Rural Development Council will enable the council to receive Federal-funding assistance needed to carry out their efforts to assist communities in rural Rhode Island.

“Building effective coalitions to support economic opportunities and an improved quality of life in rural communities comes from the collaboration of financial and human resources,” said Mr. Tuttle. “This council has been certified as having the capability to serve as a catalyst in this effort.”

First established under the previous Bush Administration, the state rural development councils were created to assist local communities in addressing issues of economic development and quality of life. The 2002 Farm Bill required councils to receive formal certification in order to continue to receive Federal funding. The formal review and certification of state rural development councils required that they meet specific structural and process requirements in order to comply with the legislation. An independent panel reviewed the applications to ensure that all legislative requirements were met.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting the USDA Southern New England jurisdiction's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma>.

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